

Waving as You Pull Out of the Driveway

Erika Saunders

When you leave,
 you untether me –
 floating
 on an inland sea.
 Like all hollow vessels,
 I bob on the tide, dipping
 in and out of this alkali
 cocktail – dipping
 and drying like wax
 to wick, which tans my skin
 to crack-lin.
 In the dead-soft inland
 sea, I float facing the cloudless
 sky– palms spread,
 sun-kissed as Santiago's
 as he's washed onto
 the beachhead. Ox
 peckers descend,
 settling onto my blistering
 breast; they pass over my sea-
 lice friends
 to blood-let the host
 instead. I bleed
 in salted cracker-crust
 white, and my eyes
 blink as hollow
 as Iamus
 before his descent.
 Suspended
 in this saturated
 salinity – fuchsia dreams
 erupt like Matisse cut-outs
 and drift along beside
 me in the brine
 shrimp bloom. Where I think
 I see you along the shore,
 smeared in red heifer ash,
 caught mid-dive, and I await
 your purifying splash.